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ABSTRACT

Intended to aid any teacher at any level to assist students who are having major difficulties with writing experiences, this handbook presents basic writing skills that students should be able to perform upon graduation from high school. The handbook begins with a definition of writing and a word about the North Carolina competency testing program. This is followed by answers to questions often asked by those concerned with writing. The handbook then outlines nine steps for the development of writing skills: (1) diagnosing, (2) motivating or setting up the writing conditions, (3) prewriting, (4) planning, (5) writing, (6) revising, (7) rewriting, (8) evaluating, and (9) refining writing skills. Appendixes include a selected list of references, a form for a writing plan, a glossary, a word list of frequent misspellings and word misuses, capitalization and punctuation rules, suggested writing topics, a form design for a business letter, an example of a practice telephone memo, and a set of suggestions for parents on how to help a child become a better writer developed by the National Council of Teachers of English. (HOD)

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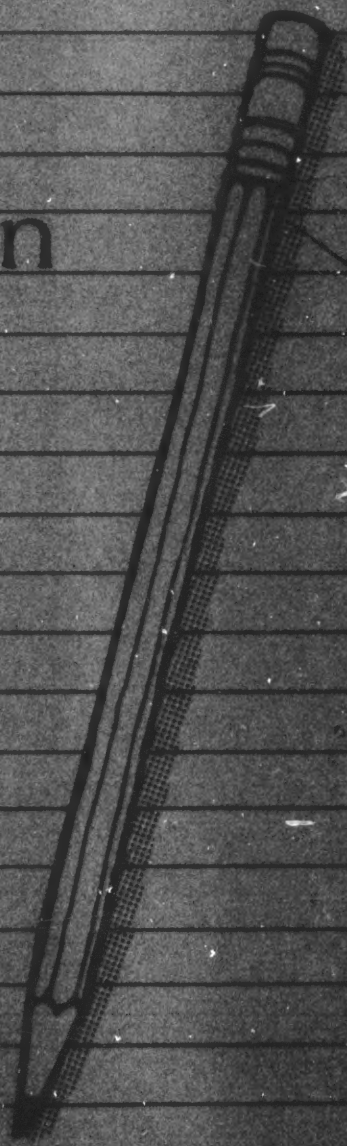
Steps for the Remediation of Writing



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North Carolina Competency Testing Commission

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Dear Colleagues:

Evaluation without development spells disaster! Before recommending the inclusion of a writing component in the Competency Test, the Commission carefully investigated the available staff development opportunities in the teaching of writing as well as the current state of the art. We included in the recommendation to the State Board of Education the necessity of providing ample in-service training in the area of writing instruction. Our concern for affording sufficient money and time for assisting teachers and administrators with the process of writing instruction should be obvious. Most of the Commission members are educators and understand the importance of undergirding any evaluation effort with adequate development.

This handbook substantiates our claims about development. It provides aids for any teacher at any level to assist students who are having major difficulties with writing experiences. Obviously, this document can serve only as a springboard of ideas; it cannot provide the panacea for all writing ills, nor do its authors intend such. Rather, the Commission believes that all students must have certain basic skills mastered in order to become self-sufficient in our society. We have attempted to present these basic writing skills in this handbook. The skills are those which students should be able to perform upon graduation from high school. All students should be encouraged to be creative, to write frequently, and to master skills to develop fluency at their highest level of ability.

Please understand that the Competency Test Commission perceives this handbook only as an aid in your endeavors. We sincerely hope that it will be of assistance, and we invite your comments and suggestions about it and all of our other work.

Finally, the Competency Test Commission would like to express its appreciation to the many teachers across North Carolina, members of the State Department of Public Instruction, and members of this commission who developed this handbook.

Sincerely,

James B. Hemby, Jr.

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DEFINITION OF WRITING

There are many possible ways to define writing, just as there are numerous ways to define reading. Each of you has your own perceptions regarding the writing process.

For the purpose of this handbook the Competency Test Commission has agreed upon the following definition of writing.

Writing is a process involving the communication of one's knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning in a written form that can be understood by others. This process involves the application of basic writing skills of handwriting, spelling, word order, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary.

It is hoped that the following questions and their answers will further elaborate on the process of writing as delineated throughout this handbook.

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A WORD ABOUT THE WRITING COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAM

The writing test for the North Carolina Competency Testing Program will consist of two parts - an objective test and a writing sample test. The objective test will contain items that will test the students' ability in capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling, word usage, sentence structure, and such forms as telephone messages and business letters. The objective test will be machine scored.

Scores on the writing section of the test will be judged as passing or failing only. To reach this decision, two judges will evaluate one or more paragraphs to determine if minimum competency has been met. The primary criteria in making this judgment will be the adequacy of composition skills. Additional criteria will determine if standard English has been used. The writing sample test will consist of the student actually writing one or more paragraphs.

QUESTIONS EVERYONE CONCERNED WITH WRITING ASKS

1. Why does a person need the basic skills of writing?

   A person needs the basic skills of writing to communicate the simple things of everyday life. Some of these ways are

   - To write to a friend
   - To fill out an application for a job
   - To fulfill the requirements of many jobs
   - To write notes, letters, requests, and even complaints

2. What are some characteristics of the problem writer that indicate the need for remediation?

   Problem writers will lack confidence, feel embarrassed, and be frustrated. They will probably write infrequently or never unless absolutely forced. Some students will tend to exhibit disruptive behavior when given writing assignments.

3. What are some characteristics of writing that indicate the need for remediation?

   Some characteristics indicating the need for remediation are

   - Lack of content
   - Incomplete sentences
   - Limited vocabulary
   - Unorganized paragraphs
   - Incorrect word endings
   - Illegible writing
   - Lack of punctuation or capitalization
   - Unconventional spelling
   - Lack of coherence
   - Lack of unity and transition

4. Can any teacher teach students to write?

Yes! Teaching writing is not complicated. There are very specific steps to be followed which help students through the process of learning to write effectively. These steps are listed below and are further delineated throughout this handbook.

5. What are those very specific steps?

The specific steps in teaching writing are

- Diagnosing
- Motivating - setting up writing conditions
- Pre-writing
- Planning
- Writing
- Revising
- Re-writing
- Evaluating

6. Can anyone learn the basic principles of writing?

Yes, but there may be problems among students with severe learning difficulties or severe physical handicaps. Keyboarding, typing, or taping can be effective for some handicapped students.

7. Where can teachers get help?

The resources for helping teachers help students write are widely available. For teachers wanting formal training, most teacher training institutions are offering courses during the summer, and the State of North Carolina is sponsoring writing projects through the colleges and universities. Persons interested in more information about these Summer Writing Projects may contact the Communications Department, State Department of Public Instruction, or Dr. James Hemby, President of Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, North Carolina 27893. Staff development is available at local levels and from regional centers. Writing institutes are available from regional centers. Teachers are encouraged to promote an "Idea Sharing" workshop to show or tell about writing lessons they have used. Other teachers and professional writers (newspaper reporters,

authors of books for children) are excellent sources and good sounding boards for ideas. There are many handbooks and much printed material available to teachers. Early childhood teachers are good sources for teachers who work with students at beginning levels of writing skills. There is an annotated bibliography in Appendix A of this handbook.

8. How can students help other students?

Peers helping other students develop writing skills can be very effective. They are, in many cases, better able to relate to difficulties being encountered by problem writers. Aside from the help given, the peer is motivated by this type of confidence-building assignment. Students who help others should do so with confidentiality and knowledge of the skill to be learned.

Some suggested activities are

- Helping another student revise a paper
- Asking questions to clarify a thought or narrow a topic
- Helping all students correct papers
- Helping another student with penmanship
- Writing a joint assignment
- Using good sample writings as guides

9. What basic writing skills do students need to function in society?

Some basic writing skills include

- Expressing complete thoughts in sentences
- Expressing complete thoughts in paragraphs
- Demonstrating appropriate sequence in writing
- Writing notes that relate complete thoughts and have meaning to the reader
- Writing salient information from a telephone message
- Completing forms for driver's license, ordering materials, job applications, and income tax with correct information
- Expressing main ideas and supporting details in written paragraphs

- Using appropriate mechanics so that the writing can be understood by the reader

- Writing business letters

- Writing friendly letters

- Writing inter-office memos and departmental reports for industry

STEP 1

DIAGNOSING

Students will need help in developing writing skills. Each student's writing will show skills and abilities which will need to be concentrated on with that particular student.

Diagnosing continues throughout all the steps in the writing process. Diagnosing students' writing involves finding out why students don't and can't write. Some students don't write because they are afraid of the consequences which may result from poor handwriting and spelling. Others feel that what they think isn't important, and they have little desire to express their thoughts in written form. Some students can't think of anything to say. Still other students have problems expressing their thoughts in a meaningful, organized way that can be understood by the reader. Diagnosing is an individual and group process. Teachers need to diagnose on a one-to-one basis as well as on a group basis.

Diagnosing writing involves self, peer, and teacher input.

I. First steps in diagnosing involve

   A. Evaluation of verbal skills (oral speaking skills)

   B. Free writing - allowing pupils to write about anything that comes to their minds

   C. Shared writing - reading what they have written to peers, teacher, volunteers

   D. Suggestions from others for possible improvement

II. Follow-up diagnostic activities are

   A. Setting individual/group writing goals

   B. Keeping individual folders of dated writing assignments

C. Evaluating results of standardized language achievement tests

D. Evaluating results of teacher-made worksheets/activities in mechanics of writing

E. Encouraging students as they write

F. Encouraging free writing

G. Making a list of five (5) or more most frequent errors made by students

STEP 2

MOTIVATING - SETTING UP THE WRITING CONDITIONS

After diagnosing students' writing strengths and weaknesses, teachers should work on students' motivation to build on strengths and to eliminate weaknesses. Praise, Praise, and then more Praise may be the only thing that will stimulate some reluctant writers. They need to feel success in all attempts they may make at writing.

To motivate a problem writer, students must see the importance and necessity of writing. There are many ways to accomplish this goal. One way is an honest and frank small group or individual discussion about the necessity of accomplishing minimal writing tasks that are and will be a part of life.

Another possible way to motivate the problem writer would be to invite adults to the classroom to talk about the necessity of writing in everyday life. You might want to consider people from business, a farmer, armed services recruiting personnel, peers who have recently graduated and are now working, teachers from technical colleges, and homemakers.

Contests are excellent motivational devices, too. Many low ability students work diligently on writing to hand in to a writing fair, for example.

Some minimal writing tasks that will be required in daily living are these:

A. Directions

B. Personal letters

C. Business letters

D. Notes and messages

E. Application forms for a job

F. Job-related writing

Once the student recognizes that writing skills are necessary, the next step is to get the student to attempt to write. Choosing the subject for writing is motivational in itself. We've all read the dull papers that result when we assign the topic, "What I Did on My Summer Vacation." Students need topics with which they are familiar and about which they can become excited. Topics for writing are suggested in Appendix G.

Every time students write, teachers need to help them grow and increase in success.

In summary, to motivate

A. Expose students to the necessity of writing

B. Provide for successes

C. Encourage growth

D. Continue interest development

E. Involve students in brainstorming ideas

STEP 3

PRE-WRITING

Initial diagnosis has been done; good writing conditions have been set. Now students are ready to explore mentally what they are going to write about.

Before making a writing assignment, you must help the problem writer think through his/her ideas. Some pre-writing experiences may be done in a teacher/student conference; most will probably be done through teacher-class activities. These pre-writing springboard experiences help students to talk, stir up ideas, share, think, focus, and become interested and excited. Then the student is ready to move to beginning free writing activities. From this, the student is ready either to select a topic or to begin writing on an assigned topic.

A pre-writing experience is crucial in the teaching of writing. You stimulate the students to Talk, Talk, Talk - Think, Think, Think - so they will be ready to Write, Write, Write.

I. Activities for free writing

A. Have students write anything that comes to mind, perhaps during two minutes of silence, while music is being played.

B. If students are slow in starting and do not begin, give them a beginning sentence.

C. During and following the pre-writing experience, the teacher could write on the board any needed words or phrases.

D. Free writing should be done without emphasis on form and mechanics.

II. Examples of pre-writing springboard experiences

A. Brainstorming an idea, an issue, a situation. What is the best car to purchase?

B. Viewing and discussing a film, a picture, a recent news story

C. Reading, hearing, discussing a story, a poem, a play, an essay, an article

D. Discussing a newspaper headline, cartoon, story

E. Listening to popular tunes

F. Describing a view from the classroom window

G. Watching a simple process performed by a person

H. Listening to a talk by a visitor

I. Going on a field trip

J. Placing three (3) or four (4) common objects, such as a potato, a tool, a basket on a table; involve students in touching, smelling these articles

STEP 4

PLANNING

The pre-writing experience has stimulated interest and thinking. Students are now ready to plan their writing.

A plan for writing is essential to good writing. Planning is a way of thinking about one's writing that helps the student move step by step from an idea or a general cluster of ideas to a logical, sequential presentation of the idea or ideas.

Guidelines are needed to help the student internalize the process of planning. In Appendix B you will find a writing plan form which will help the student develop planning skills. This form may be duplicated and given to each student to complete. One can consider the completed form as the beginning draft for composing his writing.

After repeated use of this form, students should be able to plan their writing on paper without the form, having internalized this planning process.

The following is a sample lesson procedure you may wish to follow to begin the planning process.

A SAMPLE WRITING LESSON PLAN

Topic: My Favorite Car

I. Objectives

A. Each student will do the pre-writing, planning, and first draft writing steps of the writing process.

B. Each student will write a persuasive paragraph that expresses a main idea, supported by at least two developed details or reasons.

II. Strategies

A. Two or three days prior to this lesson, assign students to bring to class pictures and information about new cars. Suggest that students check newspapers, magazines, and car dealerships for these materials.

B. Display materials brought in by students and add other materials.

C. Lead a discussion about favorite new cars and their appealing features. Have two or more students record class ideas on the chalkboard.

D. Pass out to each student a Writing Plan Form. Each student will plan a composition, filling in the form. The teacher will move about room giving encouragement and help.

E. Students will use the plan to write a first draft of a persuasive paragraph.

F. Each student will turn in the plan and the first draft at the end of the period.

III. Materials

A. Pictures, articles, brochures about new cars

B. Writing Plan Forms - one per student (Appendix B)

IV. Evaluation

A. Check the students' plans.

B. Check the students' first drafts to assess the degree of accomplishment related to the criteria.

WRITING PLAN

Based on the discussion of Cars, complete the following for your composition:

TOPIC: My favorite car

PURPOSE: To persuade

INTENDED READER: Classmates, teacher, parents

LIST IDEAS RELATED TO TOPIC:

- ✓ Mazda 726 luxury ed.
- ✓ Silver or red - matching int.
- ✓ Economical for maint.
- ✓ High gas mileage
- X Auto or shift gears
- ✓ Small tires
- ✓ Yearly design changes few
- X fold down seats (Parents not like)
- ✓ Roomy trunk - open from inside
- ✓ locked gas cap
- X less expensive than corvette

WRITE MAIN IDEA SENTENCE:

The car to buy is a Mazda 726

SELECT IDEAS TO USE AND NUMBER THEM IN THE ORDER YOU WILL USE THEM: (CHECK ITEMS TO USE, CROSS-OUT ITEMS NOT TO USE):

2 looks good - sleek sporty

1 economical - 32 MPG

3 safe and practical - roomy trunk, front and rear defrosters, locked gas cap

Now you are ready to write your composition.

STEP 5

WRITING

Now the students are ready to put their plans into FURTHER ACTION! The objective of this step is to express THINKING in WRITTEN form, knowing that REVISING (fine-tuning, clarifying, polishing, adding, deleting, substituting, rearranging) and RE-WRITING will follow.

In this step, the students will use their plans to do the first draft of the paper, keeping in mind the following:

I. State the main idea - the beginning - the introduction.

II. State and develop related ideas from the plan.

III. Keep the purpose in mind during writing.

IV. Keep the audience in mind during writing.

Students need to be monitored carefully as they follow their "pre-writing plan" to assure that each has success in this writing experience. The first draft may be a simple re-writing of the outline from the form as a paragraph. The key and goal is to make the writers feel so good about their papers that they want to develop them further. It is very helpful for the teacher to write along with the students and share his/her writing to serve as a model.

STEP 6

REVISING

Now that pre-writing, planning, and writing the first draft have been completed, it is time for revising. According to Webster, revision means "to look at again, to examine and to improve."

Reviewing one's writing requires observing and making suggestions about what has been written. The review can be by the writer and by peers. The writing can be read aloud to one peer or to a group of peers in what might be called a "helping circle" or an "editing group." Some suggestions are: "I really like this _____ about your paper," "Your paper makes me feel _____," and "I think the most important thing you are saying is _____." In reviewing the writing it will be helpful for the peers to ask questions which will clarify and improve what the student has written. The following are samples of good questions to ask if, for example, the writing is on the subject of "My Favorite Car":

1. Can you tell us what you mean by "less expensive"?
2. Did you tell us why you really like this car?
3. How did you explain "maintenance free"?
4. Have you developed two or more supporting details?
5. Are all of your ideas related to the main idea?
6. Are your ideas organized in the best order?
7. Is each sentence worded clearly?
8. Have you chosen the best words to say what you want to say?
9. Have you accomplished your purpose?

It will probably be more effective to put the writing aside for a short period of time and come back to it in a few hours or even the next day. Many times fresh ideas come after reviewing.

STEP 7

RE-WRITING

When the teacher and student feel that the writing has been revised and there is a clear understanding of what should be in the final draft, the student is ready for re-writing his/her paper. This step includes careful attention to the following:

I. Proofreading

The student will read the final copy carefully, probably several times, asking the following questions, and making necessary corrections.

A. Are sentences complete thoughts?

B. Do all sentences have a subject and verb?

C. Do all sentences begin with capital letters?

D. Do all sentences end with a period, question mark, or an exclamation point?

E. Are capital letters used correctly?

F. Are punctuation marks - commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, apostrophes, parentheses, dashes, hyphens, and ellipses - used appropriately?

G. Are all words spelled correctly?

H. Is all necessary information included in the written work?

I. Do all sentences relate to the topic?

II. Handwriting

The student should write with a pen and use neat, clear handwriting. Encourage students to be neat. If this is a huge "stumbling block," allow the use of a typewriter or assign a scribe.

III. Manuscript Form

The student will indent the paragraph, keep careful margins, and follow standard manuscript form.

STEP 8

EVALUATING

The evaluation of writing done by problem writers will be difficult at best. It will be difficult because the paper will be hard, in many cases, even to read the illegible writing; difficult because of poor grammar, usage, and spelling; and difficult because the writing will, in many cases, make absolutely no sense.

But, hidden in most writings is a faint glowing spark. Find that spark and fan it. It could be the spark that just might burst forth into a flame if it is cared for and nurtured.

If the writings are in need of extensive improvement, the evaluation should be done by the student and the teacher together. When the writings show improvements, encourage students to share their writing with their peers.

The best evaluation a student can receive is to have his/her writing appreciated by others. When possible, display and publish. Extreme care should be given not to embarrass the student.

Of course, students should know the errors they have made in grammar and mechanics. They should be given instruction in these deficiencies in basic writing skills.

Remember these points in the evaluation of writing:

I. Emphasizing grades intimidates students.

II. Commenting on the writing rather than giving a grade encourages students.

III. Treating content as primary promotes thinking.

IV. Treating mechanical errors as secondary allows primary focus to be on ideas.

V. Encouraging students to take risks in their writing promotes creativity.

VI. Following up any deficient skills is necessary.

VII. Focus on one area or one skill at a time.

VIII. Frequently, refer to the original writing plan.

These eight points are crucial if teachers are to help students to feel encouraged and to want to improve their writing.

STEP 9

CLIMBING HIGHER

With each skill learned and each milestone reached, the weak writer will need assurance and encouragement to continue to practice and gain new successes and renewed desire to be a good writer. While it is our charge in public education to teach each child to be a self-sufficient and productive adult, it is also our goal to encourage and assist each student to realize his fullest potential.

Students who have difficulties in written communications will need help in order to perform well enough to be successful in life or on any competency test requirements. Once the minimal competency skills have been mastered, students should be encouraged, and in some cases required, to work toward a program where they would further improve and refine their writing.

Some specific recommendations are:

I. Provide all teachers with in-service training in writing.

II. Involve administrators, guidance counselors, librarians, and all teachers in the writing program.

III. Encourage all teachers to give writing experiences in classes and give ample time to practice writing.

IV. Encourage vocational teachers to give instruction in vocabulary associated with specific vocational curriculum and to practice writing that will aid students in future careers.

V. Provide information and encouragement to parents regarding the importance of writing skills. (See Appendix K)

VI. Encourage business and industry to become involved in assessing and implementing an effective remedial writing program in your school.

VII. Involve students in writing contests, writing fairs, and writing magazines.

VIII. Implement in your school the "SWAT" Program ("Stop, Write, and Think"), whereby at a designated time everyone in the school stops for 15 minutes and writes what they are experiencing or thinking. These writings are personal and should not be collected or graded.

IX. Encourage all teachers to occasionally give an essay test.

APPENDIX A

SELECTED REFERENCES

Berbrich, Joan D. Writing About Amusing Things. New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1982.
This book provides an amusing way for students to play with words and to create odd and interesting word combinations. Students are shown how to combine unusual bits of information, organize them, and come up with a brand new idea.

Berbrich, Joan D. Writing About Curious Things. New York: Amsco Publications, Inc., 1981.
Attention is given to vocabulary, to specific skills needed to organize thoughts, and to sharing curious information through writing.

Berbrich, Joan D. Writing About Fascinating Things. New York: Amsco Publications, Inc., 1980.
Each chapter of this book begins with fascinating information about something that interests students. Appropriate vocabulary and word-play are included to start the student thinking.

Byrne, Donn. Teaching Writing Skills. Great Britain: Spottiswoode Ballangyne Ltd., 1979.
This book shows how various kinds of writing activities can be built into a coherent writing program.

Cahill, Robert B. and Hrebic, Herbert J. Cut The Deck: A Book Concerned With Learning How to Write.
Chicago: Stack the Deck, Inc., 1979.
The first two units of this book are confidence builders. Students explore and discover the flexibility involved in using language. After the confidence-builder exercises the next ten units deal with written composition. Students will begin with simple organizational patterns and move into more complex ones.

California State Department of Education. Handbook for Planning an Effective Writing Program, K-12. California: Department of Education, 1981.
The writers of this handbook have addressed both the content and teaching methodology of a writing program, that is, what ought to be taught and how. The discussion of each writing component includes a narrative and suggested activity, which are adaptable to various grade levels. The intent of this handbook is to provide a standard for assessing existing writing programs and to provide a tool for designing new programs.

Dellinger, Dixie. Out of the Heart - How to Design Writing Assignments for High School Courses. Berkeley, California: The National Writing Project, University of California, 1982.
The author presents a sequence of thinking and writing skills that can be incorporated into any content area. These assignments have proved effective with students of all ability levels, varying interests, and backgrounds. The major chapters of the text focus on a sequence of creative writing from fiction to exposition.

Diamond, Irene M. A Guide to Helping the Reluctant Writer. Wisconsin University: National Endowment for the Humanities, ERIC., 1980.
This guide examines the characteristics of the reluctant writer and suggests strategies for teachers to use when dealing with these characteristics. The guide also reviews the writing process, categorizes the characteristics of the reluctant writer according to grade level, and provides appropriate writing activities for each level.

Dodd, Anne Wescott. Write Now: Insights into Creative Writing. New York: Learning Trends, 1978.
This book contains nine sections which students can work through in a programmed text manner. Besides the nine sections, directions are given on keeping a journal. Students are also told how to complete a term project. Emphasis is placed on writing in detail, original expressions, and bringing in several senses while writing.

Friss, Dick. Writing Class: Teacher and Students Writing Together. ERIC., 1979.
This booklet traces the growth of a reluctant writer through a semester of a remedial writing program. Samples of the student's writing are used to illustrate writing improvement. Several teaching methods are included: model writing assignments, peer writing groups, interaction during writing, and teacher writing.

Glatthorn, Allan A. Writing In the Schools: Improvement Through Effective Leadership. Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1981.
This book focuses on the principals role in the teaching of writing. Topics covered include evaluating a school's writing program, improving writing across the curriculum, and working with parents to improve student writing.

Granowsky, Alvin and Dawkins, John. Mastering Unit-A Writing Skills Workbook. Cleveland: Modern Curriculum Press, 1983.
Grammatical rules and writing exercises are brought together in this workbook. Students are given the rule, practice work with the rule, proof-reading for application of the rule, practice test-taking, and finally a practice writing exercise in which application of the rule can take place. This is the format for all of the grammar rules included.

Grindal, Gracia. Using Literature in a Basic Writing Course. ERIC., 1979.
In this document the author gives attention to elements that are essential in using literature in a writing course. Literature can be used in a writing course if the writing assignments are sequenced so that they make developmental sense and if the writing activity is used to clarify student thinking about the literature.

Grobe, Edwin. Creative Writing Activities for the Composition Class. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch, 1974.
This book contains a compilation of 300 composition projects which can be used by students and teachers. The activities in the book provide a full semester's work of individually programmed instruction.

Haley-James, Shirley. Perspectives on Writing in Grades 1-8. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981.
This book looks at data collected by authorities regarding appropriate instruction in written composition in grades one through eight. Also covered in this book are surveys of teaching practices and reports of successful writing programs. One chapter details the trends of writing-related research in the past fifty years; the role of the classroom teacher in such research; and the future research needs of students, teachers, and policy-makers.

Handel, Ruth and Angeles, Eleanor. Reading and Writing on the Job. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979.
Throughout this book exercises are provided for students to practice reading and writing tasks that are actually performed in job situations. The skills can be used in various types of work. Some are proof-reading, reading maps and road signs, and taking notes and writing messages.

Handel, Ruth and Angeles, Eleanor. Real Life Employment Skills. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979.
This book will help students to learn and practice those reading and writing tasks that are actually performed in job situations. Special emphasis is placed on help-wanted ads, responses to ads, and interviewing techniques.

Howe, Rance C. and Naddell, Sara Anne. Grammar and Composition for Today - Book A. New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1983.
This two part book goes in depth to help students get an understanding of grammar and composition. Parts of speech, building sentences, and sentence mechanics are stressed. The composition section is devoted to the various styles of writing, the tools of writing, and kinds of writings. A useful handbook is included at the end of the book.

Hunter, Madeline. Theory into Practice: Motivation. California: TIP Publications, 1967.
This book is one of a series written to make psychological knowledge available to the classroom teacher. It endeavors to interpret that knowledge which is most useful in the daily decisions of teachers. Practical situations along with multiple choice answers are presented.

Kaiser, Barbara M. Writing Power: A Communications Lab Course in Functional Writing. Resource Monograph, No. 23. Florida University: ERIC., 1979.
This document describes an 18-week course of study designed to enable middle school students to become capable, functional writers.

Kessler, Rikki and Friedland, Joyce. Writing for Life. New York: Cambridge Book Company, 1980.
In Writing for Life students are given practical ideas for writing as they relate to self, home, friends, school, and money management. These practical applications help students in school and beyond.

Kirby, Dan and Liner, Tom. Inside Out: Developing Strategies for Teaching Writing. New Jersey: Boynton Cook, 1981.
This work is a source-book of activities for each part of the writing process. The section on poetry offers suggestions for writers of all abilities.

Knowles, Marlene and Wardell, Arlene. Everyday Reading and Writing English, 5112.24.
Dade County Public Schools: Miami, Fla., ERIC.
This course for grades eight through twelve is to help students learn to read, write, and interpret letters, business forms, instructions, signs, maps, and magazines.

Koch, Carl and Brazil, James M. Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1978.
This is a book of immediately useable exercises, unencumbered by lengthy discussions of theory. The purpose of this book is to provide a resource of strategies for the composition classroom that makes use of generally accepted research in composition.

Leonard, Robert J. and deBeer, Peter H. A Survival Kit for Teachers of Composition. New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1982.
This writing improvement program includes forty sessions that speak to motivation, skills, expository writing, and polishing. A valuable part of the book is the inclusion of samples of student writing.

Levy, Wilbert J. Composition: Pre-writing, Response, Revision. New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1982.
The goal of this book is to help students improve their ability to write a three or four paragraph composition. Each unit begins with a series of pre-writing activities. One helpful feature of this book is that the many strands of instruction involved in teaching composition are woven together meaningfully such that there is a natural progression toward developing a thesis, organizing subject matter and committing the final product to paper.

Levy, Wilbert J. Writing English: Foundations. New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1982.
This is an incisive text offering an overview of the broad scope of composition skills at a basic level. The major topics of the book are Sentence Structure, Sentence Composition, Sentence Sequence and the Paragraph, and The Two-paragraph Composition. A key feature of the book is Introduction to the Concept of the Sentence Sequence.

Macrorie, Ken. Telling Writing. New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1980.
This book contrasts accepted ideas about writing with new ways of teaching students to write. Many of the activities should appeal to high school students.

Miller, Cynthia and Rinderer, Regina. Speaking Your Writing: A Rehearsal Technique for the Basic Writing Student. ERIC.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, October, 1980.
In the talk-write technique, the student discusses all thoughts on a topic and these are recorded. The student listens to the recording for possible thesis, talks through ideas with a definite focus, then writes them down with supporting points. This technique makes the writing process less threatening.

Moffett, James. Active Voice. New Jersey: Boynton Cook, 1981.
This book contains writing assignments with a rationale for each.

Murray, Elizabeth. Improving Children's Writing. Columbus, Ohio: Ginn and Company, 1982.
This pamphlet contains an overview of the characteristics of a good writing program. However, its value lies in the sections on clarity, unity, style, and literacy because it contains suggestions written for children for improvement in these four areas.

Pierson, Howard. Teaching Writing. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
Designed for English teachers in secondary schools, this book provides convenient and concise information regarding tendencies and issues in teaching writing. Some of the issues addressed are correcting of writing, motivational composition, grammar, and research.

Powell, David. What Can I Write About? 7000 Topics for High School Students. Urbana: Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981.
Each section of this book defines a type of writing, offers how to suggestions specific to that type, and lists possible topics. The kinds of writing included are: description, comparison/contrast, process, narrative, classification/division, cause/effect, exposition, argumentation, definition, creative writing, and critical writing.

Scholastic Book Services. Reading and Writing on the Job: Teacher's Guide. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979.
This 32-page guide outlines the set of objectives for each unit and provides specific teaching suggestions for the attainment of these objectives. The answers to the Skills Book activities are also listed in this guide. Suggestions for implementation techniques and follow-up enrichment exercises are included.

Scholastic Book Services. Visuals/Spirit Masters. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979.
This book contains spirit masters and transparencies on skills relating to the world of work and experiences that might be encountered on the job. Important topics covered are job application forms, writing business letters, writing factual reports, outlining sequential directions, and job hunting skills surveys.

Scholastic Book Services. Real Life Writing Skills. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1979.
Real life writing skills are necessary means by which to communicate ideas and information clearly and correctly. This book shows the learner how to write sentences, paragraphs, outlines, and letters so that anyone will understand what has been written. These everyday, practical skills are fun and necessary at home, at school, and in any job.

Shaughnessy, Mina P. Errors and Expectations. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
This book addresses common errors students make in writing and offers suggestions for teaching strategies that will benefit the student of writing. The major sections of the book are Handwriting and Punctuation, Syntax, Common Errors, Spelling, Vocabulary, and Beyond the Sentence. The author gives examples of the problems and suggests ways a teacher might approach them.

Shevitz, Linda and Berman, Michelle. The Basics and Beyond. Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1981.
Motivational real-world activities to help upper elementary and junior high school students build needed practical written expression skills are provided in this book. The reproducible student worksheets are intended as a supplemental resource tool for reinforcing and enriching a regular classroom language arts program, rather than as a textbook for introducing specific writing skills.

Stanford, Gene and Smith, Marie. A Guidebook for Teaching Creative Writing. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982.
This volume deals with the principles of teaching creative writing, stimulating students to write, teaching them to create images and characters and events, and analyzing and writing about the creative efforts of others. Perhaps the most valuable feature of this book is the section of Reproduction Pages, which can be used to make masters for spirit duplication or transparencies for the overhead projector.

Strong, William. Sentence Combining: A Composition Book. New York: Random House, 1973.
Sentence Combining is a book with a simple aim: to help students strengthen writing skills and get a feel for some of the stylistic choices available in written English. Students investigate the variety of ways to say things in English; the search is for multiple answers rather than for a single "right" answer and for the development of more sophisticated and varied sentence patterns.

Tarmac. Writing Skills for Daily Living. Asheville, N.C.: Tarmac, 1981.
This book is designed for students who need instruction and practice in basic writing skills and practical writing. It can provide useful review and reinforcement of writing skills for all students from junior high school through freshman composition in college. However, the program has been especially designed to help the academically disadvantaged and other low achieving students to overcome their deficiencies in writing. It provides a variety of activities to engage students in the practical application of writing skills.

Warriner, John E. English Grammar and Composition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1982.
This is a six-book series for grades seven through twelve and is a direct, clearly marked and uncluttered route to competence in the use of English. Definitions, rules, and important teaching points are stated succinctly, fully illustrated, and applied in the drills and exercises.

Wolfe, Denny T.; Lipscomb, C. C.; Sexton, Mary and Tucker, M. Lawrence. Writing in the Wild, Young Spring: Teaching Composition, 4-12. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1981.
Part I of this book is composed of essays on topics and issues related to teaching writing. Part II contains selected writing lessons prepared by teachers across the state. Together, the two parts should provide daily, concrete help to those who wish to do a better job in teaching students how to write well.

Wolfe, Denny and Reising, Robert. Writing For Learning in the Content Area. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walsh, 1983.
A practical teaching approach for using writing as a tool for learning in content areas comes through in this book. Chapters on writing as a means of discovery, plus duplicatable teaching lessons in English, social studies, science, math, business, and vocational education. The book concludes with a chapter about evaluating writing.

Instructional Television of the NC Department of Public Instruction

Poetry Alive, Ellen Johnston-Hale.
This in-service program follows Ms. Johnston-Hale through a day of working with students in first and second grades, the middle grades, and K-12 teachers.

Write On! Children's Television International
This series is for students who need help with basic writing skills. Each program demonstrates one grammar lesson.

Zebra Wings, Agency for Instructional Television
This program is designed to stimulate students' imagination and self-confidence so that they will want to write about what they see, think, feel.

APPENDIX B

WRITING PLAN

Based on the discussion of _____,
complete the following for your composition:

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

INTENDED READER: _____

LIST IDEAS RELATED TO TOPIC:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

WRITE MAIN IDEA SENTENCE:

_____

_____

SELECT IDEAS TO USE AND NUMBER THEM IN THE ORDER YOU WILL USE THEM: (CHECK ITEMS TO USE, CROSS-OUT ITEMS NOT TO USE):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now you are ready to write your composition.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

Abbreviation: To reduce a word to a shortened form.

Examples: N.C. for North Carolina

Dr. for Doctor

Adjective: A word used with a noun or pronoun to tell which one, what kind, how many, or whose.

Examples: Beautiful girl

Red rose

Good baby

Eight children

Adverb: A word used with a verb, adjective or another adverb to tell when, where, how, or how much.

Examples: Run quickly

Very cold

Sadly, he spoke

Alphabetize: To arrange in alphabetical order. Arranged in ABC order.

Examples: Al, Betty, Chris, Dawn, Ernie, Frank

Arabic Numerals: The figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 0.

Audience: In writing, the "audience" is the person or persons who will read your writing.

Example: If you write a note to your best friend, then your best friend will be the audience.

Capitalize: To begin with a capital letter.

Categorize: To put into groups.

Clarity: The ability to write clearly.

Clause: A group of words containing a subject and predicate and used as part of a sentence.

Example: If she can help.

Colon: A punctuation mark (:) used before a long quotation, example, or series. It is also used after the greeting of a formal letter.

Comma: A punctuation mark (,) used to show a pause that is shorter than the pause at the end of a sentence.

Communication: The giving or exchanging of information. Listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing are all forms of communication.

Compare: To examine certain things in order to find out how they are alike or different.

Competency Test: An exam given to measure a skill. In North Carolina, the competency tests in reading, math, and writing are designed to assure that all students who receive a high school diploma have the basic skills in these areas to be self-sufficient in our society.

Composition: A piece of prose writing.

Compound Predicate: Two or more parts of a sentence that say something about the subject.

Compound Sentence: A sentence made up of two or more clauses.

Conclude: To bring to an end, to finish.

Confidential: Information which is not to be shared; privileged communication.

Conjunction: A word used to join words, phrases, or clauses.

Examples: And

Or

Either

But

Contraction: A shortened form of a word or phrase.

Examples: I'm for I am

They're for they are

Can't for cannot

Describe: To write about in some detail. If you describe something you tell about the characteristics of that thing.

Detail: Any of the small parts that go to make up something.

Develop: To expand. In writing, to develop a topic is to add supporting details which tell more about the topic sentence.

Draft: A trial copy of a piece of writing.

Essay: A short piece of writing. It could be a poem or a paragraph.

Example: Something chosen to show what the rest are like.

Exclamation Point: Punctuation mark (!) used after a word or sentence to show surprise, anger, or other strong feelings.

Focus: Center of activity or interest. The focus of a writing assignment would be the topic for that assignment.

Handwriting: A person's way of forming letters and words in writing.

Identify: To show or prove to be a certain person or thing.

Indent: To begin a line of typed or written material farther in from the margin than the other material on the page.

Introduction: As it relates to writing, it is the beginning, start, etc.

Legible: Clear enough to be read easily.

Main Idea: The topic of a piece of writing.

Manuscript: A book or article that is typewritten or in handwriting.

Margin: The blank space around the writing or printing on a page.

Memo: Short form of memorandum.

Memorandum: A short note written to help someone remember something.

Modifier: A word that describes or qualifies. Adjectives and adverbs are modifiers.

Note: Something written down to help one remember.

Noun: A word that is the name of a person, place, thing, action, or quality.

Examples: John

Desk

Truth

Organize: To arrange or place according to a system.

Paragraph: A group of sentences that are related to each other. A paragraph has a main idea and several other sentences that support or tell more about the main sentence. Paragraphs are usually indented.

Example: Country music is gaining much popularity in the U.S.A. It is heard on most all radio stations. A country music concert was recently held in Washington, D.C. at the Kennedy Center. Country music is used for the theme music for many modern movies.

The first sentence is the main idea; the second, third, and fourth sentences are supporting statements.

Period: A punctuation mark (.) at the end of a sentence.

Persuade: To get someone to do or believe something.

Example: My teacher persuaded me to finish the assignment.

Phrase: A group of related words not containing a subject and a verb.

Plural: More than one.

Examples: Dishes

Boxes

Boys

Predicate: The word or words that say something about the subject of a sentence or clause.

Preposition: A word that connects a noun or pronoun to something else in the sentence.

Pre-writing: The process that precedes writing; thinking, organizing, and finding the most interesting way to express thoughts in writing.

Print: To write in letters resembling printed ones.

Pronoun: A word used in place of a noun.

Examples: He

She

It

Them

Proofread: To read in order to correct errors.

P.S.: Abbreviation for postscript.

Punctuation: The use of commas, periods, etc., in writing.

Question Mark: The punctuation mark (?) used after a word or sentence to show that a question is being asked.

Quotation Marks: The marks (" ") placed before and after words that are quoted.

Reason: A cause for an action.

Example: The reason for the fight was a dispute over the umpire's call.

Reference: Someone or something you consult to get information. Reference books are encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.

Refine: To improve, polish. A piece of writing is refined in the final draft.

Resume': A brief report that tells the main point.

Revision: The work of thinking about and changing writing.

Re-write: To write again in different words.

Roman Numerals: Letters of the Roman alphabet used as numerals.

Run-on Sentence: Two or more sentences without correct capitalization or punctuation separating them.

Semi Colon: A punctuation mark (;) used to show a pause that is shorter than the pause at the end of the sentence, but longer than the pause marked by the comma. It is used to separate closely related clauses, especially when they contain commas.

Sentence: A group of words used to tell, ask, command, or exclaim something. Having a subject and a predicate and expressing a complete thought.

Example: Four kinds of sentences:

(1) Declarative Sentence: Makes a statement.

(2) Interrogative Sentence: Asks a question.

(3) Exclamatory Sentence: Shows strong feeling.

(4) Imperative Sentence: Gives a command.

Sentence Fragment: A group of words that does not express a complete thought.

Example: Because he did not know the answer.

Series: A group or number of similar or related things arranged in a row.

Singular: Showing that only one is meant.

Examples: Boy

Dog

Desk

Statement: Something stated or said.

Subject: The word or group of words in a sentence about which something is said.

Summary: A brief report that tells the main points in a few words.

Supporting Detail: Information that strengthens the main idea in written work.

Verb: A word that shows action or a condition of being.

Examples: Run

Go

Tell

Is

Are

Were

Zip Code: A system for speeding up the deliveries of mail. Under this system, the post office has assigned a special code number to each area and place in the country.

APPENDIX D

WORD LIST

200 words with high frequency of misspelling and misuse in student writings. List compiled by the North Carolina Competency Test Commission, 1983.

a lot of	can't	finally	passed	then
accept	car	first	past	there
across	caution	fixed	pastime	they
affect	cents	flour	people	they're
against	character	flower	pizza	third
all ready	check	for	poison	this
all right	children	formally	police	thorough
all wrong	choice	formerly	political	though
allowed	city	forty	possibly	thought
aloud	close	four	price	through
already	closed	friend	principal	to
always	clothes	guaranteed	principle	tomorrow
among	committee	hamburger	probably	too
an	compact	hardest	radio	tried
and	company	height	read	truly
animal	compute	help	receipt	two
around	country	helped	received	usually
as	county	house	recipe	very
ask	danger	humorous	recognize	walked
author	dear	immediately	recommend	want
avenue	decide	in	red	watched
bad	deer	intelligent	report	wear
badly	desert	interstate	right	weather
banana	dessert	its	road	went
bargain	disease	it's	salesman	were
beautiful	don't	judgment	sandwich	where
because	during	keep	school	whether
before	effect	kept	separate	who's
beginning	eighth	ladies	since	whose
believe	electric	left	sincerely	women
between	emergency	length	started	won't
beware	end	listen	street	work
bought	engine	love	succeed	worked
breath	environment	meant	teacher	world
broken	especially	men	telephone	would
brought	except	money	television	wouldn't
build	exit	necessary	than	years
business	favorite	ninety	their	your
buy	February	opportunity	them	you're
by	field	paid	themselves	yours

APPENDIX E

CAPITALIZATION

The following rules should be mastered by all students as a basic minimum requirement for writing.

I. Capitalize the pronoun I.

Example: Shall I open the door?

II. Capitalize the first word in every sentence.

Example: The car is new.

III. Capitalize proper nouns.

Examples:		
	Names of persons:	Jim Brown
	Cities:	Raleigh
	States:	North Carolina
	Countries:	England
	Rivers:	Catawba River
	Streets:	Main Street
	Parks:	Freedom Park
	Mountains:	Mt. Mitchell
	Months:	March
	Organizations:	Beta Club
	Buildings:	Empire State Building
	Special events:	Super Bowl
	Holidays:	Father's Day Labor Day
	Religions:	Baptist Catholic
	Stores:	Belk
	Languages:	English French Spanish
	Magazines:	Newsweek
	Restaurants:	Pizza Hut

Cars: Ford

TV Programs: Muppets

Schools: Freedom High

Industries: Carver Cement Company

IV. Capitalize titles.

Examples: Dr. Smith

Uncle Pat

Mr. Brown

Reverend Smith

Sheriff Smith

Mayor Edwards

Coach Jones

President White

APPENDIX F

PUNCTUATION

The following rules should be mastered by all students as a basic minimum requirement for writing.

I. Three end punctuations are a period, question mark and exclamation point.

A. A period follows a statement or command (a sentence).

Examples: He is on the football team.

Close the door.

B. A question mark follows a question.

Example: What time is it?

C. An exclamation point follows an exclamation.

Example: Wow! That was a loud noise!

II. Abbreviations are followed by a period.

Examples: Nov.

Mr.

Mrs.

N.C.

T.V.

III. Commas are used to separate words, sentences and dates.

A. Commas are used between words or phrases in a series.

Example: My favorite foods are pizza, hot dogs, french fries and hamburgers.

B. Use a comma before "and," "but," "or," "nor," "for," when they join two independent clauses (a compound sentence).

Example: He ate all of the pizza, but he did not drink any of the milk.

C. Use a comma to separate the day of the month and the year, the city from the state.

Examples: June 17, 1983

He lives in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

IV. Quotation marks are used when one writes the exact words of a speaker.

Example: He said, "I will bring my car to school tomorrow."

V. Apostrophes are used to show ownership or omissions (contraction).

Examples: Betty's car

It's a nice day.

I can't go with you.

VI. Hyphen is used when a word is divided at the end of a line.

Example: I will call you to-
morrow night.

VII. Colons may be used for the following:

A. After salutation in a business letter.

Examples: Dear Sirs:

Dear Mrs. Miller:

B. Before a list of items.

Example: We have the following sports at our school: football, track, basketball, tennis, soccer, swimming, baseball, softball, cross country, and volleyball.

C. Between the hour and minute when time is written.

Examples: 9:45 p.m.

8:00 a.m.

APPENDIX G

SUGGESTED WRITING TOPICS

1. Knowing How to Write Is a Necessary Life Skill
2. The Prettiest Thing I Have Ever Seen
3. The Value of Railroads
4. Reading Is Important
5. My Favorite Food
6. Something That Would Improve Our School
7. Left-handed People
8. We Need a Law to _____
9. K Is for Kitchen
10. My Favorite Excuse
11. My Favorite Sandwich
12. How Long to Talk on the Telephone
13. My Favorite Color
14. My Ambition in Life
15. How to Have a Party
16. My Favorite Thing
17. How to Plant a Tree
18. A Good Summer Job
19. Dogs Are Better Pets Than Cats
20. Cats Are Better Pets Than Dogs
21. Coca Cola Is Better Than Pepsi
22. Pepsi Is Better Than Coca Cola
23. Travel by Plane Is as Safe as Travel by Car
24. Travel by Car Is as Safe as Travel by Plane
25. Airplanes Are a Menace to Society and Should be Abolished

26. The School Year Should Be a Full Year Long

27. Walking Is More Healthful Than Many Modern Sports

28. Modern Sports Are More Healthful Than Walking

29. Teenage Drivers Are Better Drivers Than Adults

30. Adults Are Better Drivers Than Teenagers

31. Girls Are Smarter Than Boys

32. Boys Are Smarter Than Girls

33. Football Is a Better Sport Than Soccer

34. Soccer Is a Better Sport Than Football

35. The Eastern Part of the United States Does Not Exist

36. Cars Are Dangerous and Should be Replaced by the Horse and Buggy

37. Television Is Harmful to Children

38. The Chevrolet Sting Ray Is the Best Sports Car on the Road

39. The First Car You Buy Should Be a Used One

40. The First Car You Buy Should Be a New One

41. My Most Embarrassing Moment

42. The Most Important Person in My Life

43. I Wish My Family Could

44. The Greatest Thing About My School

45. The Worst Thing About My School

46. Summer Is By Far the Best Season of the Year

APPENDIX H

FORM DESIGN FOR BUSINESS LETTER

Street, Route, or Box
City, State Zip Code
Date

Person or Company Writing Letter to
Street, Route, or Box
City, State Zip Code

Greeting (Dear Sir or Madam, etc.):

(Body of Letter)

Closing (Sincerely,
Yours truly, etc.),

Signature of Person
Writing Letter

FORM OF BUSINESS ENVELOPE

Address of
Person
Sending Letter

Name of Company
Street, Route, or Box
City, State Zip Code

APPENDIX I

PRACTICE APPLICATION BLANK

Social Security Number _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____
Number and Street or P.O. Box Number

_____
City State Zip Code

Telephone _____ Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Education - Circle Highest Grade Completed:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Work Experience:

Date	Place	Supervisor

References (Other than Members of Family):

Name	Address	Position

APPENDIX J

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRACTICE TELEPHONE MEMO

Read the following message to the class twice. Students may take notes or fill out the form as they go.

> Hello, my name is Bob Drake from Matthews Super Service Station. Will you please tell your parents that the battery they ordered is here. The cost will be $85.26. They can bring the car in and we will install it. Please have them call before they come in. Our number is 847-2243. Thank you.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

To: _____ Date: _____

From: _____

Message: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name of person who took message: _____

To _____

Date _____ Time _____

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M _____

of _____

Phone _____

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		CAME IN	

Message _____

_____

_____

_____

Operator

To _____

Date _____ Time _____

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M _____

of _____

Phone _____

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		CAME IN	

Message _____

_____

_____

_____

Operator

To _____

Date _____ Time _____

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M _____

of _____

Phone _____

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		CAME IN	

Message _____

_____

_____

_____

To _____

Date _____ Time _____

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

M _____

of _____

Phone _____

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		CAME IN	

Message _____

_____

_____

_____

55

APPENDIX K

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A BETTER WRITER

Suggestions for Parents from the National Council of Teachers of English

(Reprinted by Permission)

Dear Parent:

We're pleased you want to know how to help the National Council of Teachers of English effort to improve the writing of young people. Parents and teachers working together are the best means for assuring that children and youth will become skillful writers.

Because the situation in every home is different, we can't say when the best time is to pursue each of the following suggestions. In any case, please be aware that writing skill develops slowly. For some, it comes early; for others it comes late. Occasionally, a child's skill may even seem to go backwards. Nonetheless, with your help and encouragement, the child will certainly progress.

The members of the National Council of Teachers of English welcome your involvement in your child's education in writing. We hope you will enjoy following these suggestions for helping your child become a better writer, both at home and at school.

Things to Do at Home

1. Build a climate of words at home. Go places and see things with your child; then talk about what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched. The basis of good writing is good talk, and younger children especially grow into stronger control of language when loving adults -- particularly parents -- share experiences and rich talk about those experiences.

2. Let children see you write often. You're both a model and a teacher. If children never see adults write, they gain an impression that writing occurs only at school. What you do is as important as what you say. Have children see you writing notes to friends, letters to business firms, perhaps stories to share with the children. From time to time, read aloud what you have written and ask the children their opinion of what you've said. If it's not perfect, so much the better. Making changes in what you write confirms for the child that revision is a natural part of writing, which it is.

3. Be as helpful as you can in helping children write. Talk through their ideas with them; help them discover what they want to say. When they ask for help with spelling, punctuation, and usage, supply that help. Your most effective role is not as a critic but as a helper. Rejoice in effort, delight in ideas, and resist the temptation to be critical.

4. Provide a suitable place for children to write. A quiet corner is best, the child's own place, if possible. If not, any flat surface with elbow room, a comfortable chair, and a good light will do.

5. Give, and encourage others to give, the child gifts associated with writing:
   - pens of several kinds
   - pencils of appropriate size and hardness
   - a desk lamp
   - pads of paper, stationery, and envelopes - even stamps
   - a booklet for a diary or daily journal (Make sure that the booklet is the child's private property; when children want to share, they will.)
   - a dictionary appropriate to the child's age and needs. Most dictionary use is for checking spelling, but a good dictionary contains fascinating information on word origins, synonyms, pronunciation, and so forth.
   - a thesaurus for older children. This will help in the search for the "right" word.
   - a typewriter, even a battered portable will do, allowing for occasional public messages, like neighborhood newspapers, play scripts
   - erasers or "white-out" liquid for correcting errors that the child wants to repair without rewriting.

6. Encourage (but do not demand) frequent writing. Be patient with reluctance to write. "I have nothing to say" is a perfect excuse. Recognize that the desire to write is a sometime thing. There will be times when a child "burns" to write, others when the need is cool. But frequency of writing is important to develop the habit of writing.

7. Praise the child's efforts at writing. Forget what happened to you in school, and resist the tendency to focus on errors of spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical parts of writing. Emphasize the child's successes. For every error the child makes, there are dozens of things he or she has done well.

8. Share letters from friends and relatives. Treat such letters as special events. Urge relatives and friends to write notes and letters to the child, no matter how brief. Writing is especially rewarding when the child gets a response. When thank you notes are in order, after a holiday especially, sit with the child and write your own notes at the same time. Writing ten letters (for ten gifts) is a heavy burden for the child; space the work and be supportive.

9. Encourage the child to write away for information, free samples, travel brochures. For a great many suggestions about where to write and how to write, purchase a copy of the helpful U.S. Postal Service booklet, All About Letters (available from National Council of Teachers of English @ $1.50 per copy).

10. Be alert to occasions when the child can be involved in writing. For example, helping with grocery lists; adding notes at the end of parents' letters; sending holiday and birthday cards; taking down telephone messages; writing notes to friends; helping plan trips by writing for information; drafting notes to school for parental signature; writing notes to letter carriers and other service persons; preparing invitations to family get-togethers.

Writing for real purposes is rewarding, and the daily activities of families present many opportunities for purposeful writing. Involving your child may take some coaxing, but it will be worth your patient effort.

Things to Do for School Writing Programs

1. Ask to see the child's writing, either the writing brought home or the writing kept in folders at school. Encourage the use of writing folders, both at home and at school. Most writing should be kept, not thrown away. Folders are important means for helping both teachers and children see progress in writing skill.

2. Be affirmative about the child's efforts in school writing. Recognize that for every error a child makes, he or she will do many things right. Applaud the good things you see. The willingness to write is fragile. Your optimistic attitude toward the child's efforts is vital to strengthening the writing habit.

3. Be primarily interested in the content, not the mechanics of expression. It's easy for many adults to spot misspelling, faulty word usage, and shaky punctuation. Perfection in these escapes most adults, so don't demand it of children. Sometimes teachers -- for these same reasons -- will mark only a few mechanical errors, leaving others for another time. What matters most in writing is words, sentences, and ideas. Perfection in mechanics develops slowly. Be patient.

4. Find out if children are given writing instruction and practice in writing on a regular basis. Daily writing is the ideal; once a week is not often enough. If classes are too large in your school, understand that it may not be possible for teachers to ask for as much writing practice as they or you would like. Insist on smaller classes -- no more than 25 in elementary schools and no more than four classes of 25 for secondary school English teachers.

5. Ask if every teacher is involved in helping youngsters write better. Work sheets, blank filling exercises, multiple choice tests, and similar materials are sometimes used to avoid having children write. If children and youth are not being asked to write sentences and paragraphs about science, history, geography, and the other school subjects, they are not being helped to become better writers. All teachers have responsibility to help children improve their writing skills.

6. See if youngsters are being asked to write in a variety of forms (letters, essays, stories, etc.) for a variety of purposes (to inform, persuade, describe, etc.) and for a variety of audiences (other students, teachers, friends, strangers, relatives, business firms). Each form, purpose, and audience demands differences of style, tone, approach, and choice of words. A wide variety of writing experiences is critical to developing effective writing.

7. Check to see if there is continuing contact with the imaginative writing of skilled authors. While it's true we learn to write by writing, we also learn to write by reading. The works of talented authors should be studied not only for ideas but also for the writing skills involved. Good literature is an essential part of any effective writing program.

8. Watch out for "the grammar trap." Some people may try to persuade you that a full understanding of English grammar is needed before students can express themselves well. Some knowledge of grammar is useful, but too much time spent on the study of grammar steals time from the study of writing. Time is much better spent in writing and conferring with the teacher or other students about each attempt to communicate in writing.

9. Encourage administrators to see that teachers of writing have plenty of supplies -- writing paper, teaching materials, duplicating and copying machines, dictionaries, books about writing, and classroom libraries of good books.

10. Work through your PTA and your school board to make writing a high priority. Learn about writing and the ways youngsters learn to write. Encourage publication of good student writing in school newspapers, literary journals, local newspapers, and magazines. See that the high school's best writers are entered into the National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Awards in Writing Program or the Scholastic Writing Awards or other writing contests. Let everyone know that writing matters to you.

By becoming an active participant in your child's education as a writer, you will serve not only your child but other children and youth as well. You have an important role to play, and we encourage your involvement.

For additional copies of this brochure, send requests prepaid to the National Council of Teachers of English Order Department, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. Up to 14, free; 15 - 99, $.05 each; 100 or more, $4.50 per hundred. Parents and teachers are encouraged to make copies for use with local groups. The brochure is also available in Spanish from National Council of Teachers of English.

"A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

William Strunk, Jr.